



NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

Red Deer, AB

Day 2

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EVIDENCE

Witness 6: Dr. Curtis Wall

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[00:00:00]

Shawn Buckley

Our next witness, he is attending online. It's Dr. Curtis Wall. Curtis, can you hear me?

Dr. Curtis Wall

Yes, I can.

Shawn Buckley

Can you turn your camera on? There we go. So Curtis, can you state your full name for the record, spelling your first and last name?

Dr. Curtis Wall

Curtis Wall, C-U-R-T-I-S W-A-L-L.

Shawn Buckley

Curtis, do you promise to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?

Dr. Curtis Wall

Yes, I do.

Shawn Buckley

Now, I guess I should call you Dr. Wall. You have been a chiropractor for 26 years.

Dr. Curtis Wall

That's correct.

Shawn Buckley

And in that 26 years—but for an incident you’re going to speak about involving COVID—you have not had a single issue with the college that licenses you as a chiropractic doctor.

Dr. Curtis Wall

That’s correct.

Shawn Buckley

So can you share with us what happened?

Dr. Curtis Wall

Yeah, so I’ve got several bullet points to share, just to keep me on track.

Shawn Buckley

Sure, do you want to share screen then and show us those?

Dr. Curtis Wall

No, they’re just kind of random.

Shawn Buckley

Okay. I’m sorry. I thought you meant slides. So carry on.

Dr. Curtis Wall

If you have any questions, please interject.

So the beginning of 2020, of course, a pandemic was called. I’ll say right up front that I was suspicious about what was being declared: call it a gut feeling, call it intuition or discernment, but I just felt like something wasn’t right. And then, if we head to April of 2020, our profession said that we had to keep our offices closed. They were closed except for emergency care. And so, that lasted for approximately one month. And then in May of 2020, we were allowed to reopen, but the profession had created a pandemic practice directive. And among many requirements in that directive, one of them was mandatory masking, which I did.

I did initially mask, but immediately after wearing a mask, I noticed that I didn’t feel great: I felt anxious. I felt claustrophobic. I felt shortness of breath. I couldn’t concentrate properly. And I couldn’t provide the right kind of patient care. So I did that for several weeks and decided after that, I just couldn’t wear a mask. So I took the mask off. And from approximately June of 2020 and going forward, I never wore a mask. And then if we had to fast forward to early December of 2020, I received a call from Alberta Health Services [AHS]. Health Inspector Heidi Ho said that they had received an anonymous patient complaint that I wasn’t wearing a mask or my staff wasn’t wearing a mask—and at the time, my staff was my son—and that I had no plexiglass barrier in the office.

Shawn Buckley

So can I just stop you because you hadn't been wearing a mask for some time. How were your patients reacting to that?

Dr. Curtis Wall

Really good. I had maybe one or two patients that would ask me why. And I would give my reasons, and they were quite fine with it. If anybody was not good with it, I would not have known. They may have left my practice, but 99 per cent of people were just fine.

Shawn Buckley

Okay, so as far as you knew everything was going fine.

Dr. Curtis Wall

Yes.

Shawn Buckley

And then you get this call from an AHS inspector.

Dr. Curtis Wall

Yeah, that's right. And so, I did confirm. I said, "Yes, I'm not wearing a mask. And I do not have a plexiglass barrier in the office." And she said, "Well, we're going to have to pass this information off to your college." And so the very next day, I received a phone call from the Registrar of the College [of Chiropractors of Alberta], Dr. Todd Halowski. And he asked me to fill him in on what transpired with the call with the Alberta Health Services inspector. So I told him some of the details. I told him that I was mask exempt and he stated that he wanted to know what was the reason behind my mask exemption. If I was coming within six feet of patients,

[00:05:00]

the pandemic practice directive stated that I had to be masked. I told him that I wasn't comfortable sharing personal health information with him just based on privacy laws. And so at that point, he said, well, he was going to have to pass this information on to the complaints director of the College, who was David Lawrence.

And so the very next day I received a call from David Lawrence. He asked me if I had not been wearing a mask and if I had no intention of doing so going forward. I said, "That's correct." And very nonchalantly, he said, "Well, I'm going to be initiating a process to have your licence suspended. And that will carry out very quickly." At that point I was quite shocked. I said, "Well, what about accommodation for me? I have an inability to wear a mask." And he stated that his primary responsibility was to protect the public, and that my not wearing a mask was putting my patients in danger, and that I was putting them at an unnecessary risk. To which I said, "How am I putting them at risk when I'm asymptomatic, and that if somebody gets COVID, they have a 99.9 per cent chance of surviving?" And so he said that he wasn't willing to— In fact, he disagreed with that information. He said he wasn't willing to debate me or discuss the issue further. So I told him I didn't want to lose my licence over this. And he said, "Well, I can't make you wear a mask. But if you're not going to wear a mask, you're going to have to sit out the rest of the pandemic and not

practise.” And so he said he was going to be passing this information on to a council-appointed member, who was going to look over his decision to suspend my practice, and that council-appointed member would either confirm or deny that.

Shawn Buckley

And so, you’ve got legal counsel involved. You hired James Kitchen who’s been a witness here.

Dr. Curtis Wall

So that’s my very next point. Because at that point, I realized I was definitely in over my head. I needed legal counsel, and so I actually contacted the JCCF [Justice Centre for Constitutional Freedoms]. They put me in touch with James Kitchen. I’ll be quite honest, James has been a lifesaver, and he has done such excellent work. And so I’m much indebted to his services. It’s very stressful, that time. Like I said, and like you mentioned, in 26 years of practice I have not ever had a complaint issued to the College from a patient. And I’ve never been in trouble with my regulatory board. So these were definitely stressful times.

So after that, James demonstrated to the College that traditionally, licensed suspensions are reserved for practitioners who commit sexual abuse, commit fraud, or come to work intoxicated; that, really, I had not demonstrated any threat to my patients by a perceived threat or perceived danger of COVID. But, on the same note, James recommended that I would try to get a medical mask exemption through my GP.

So I contacted my GP and the nurse on the phone said that I had become inactive and my doctor was not seeing new patients. And he was also not issuing mask exemptions. So at that point I was looking for a GP. I did eventually find one, somebody who was willing to see me in his office, who provided a consultation, and he also provided me a mask exemption, based on my mental concerns and limitations.

From there, the very second week of December of 2020, Alberta Health Services came to my office door, two health inspectors, Heidi Ho and another inspector, and they placed a closure notice on my door effectively barring me from practising. And so for one month James and I had to come up with a strategy to satisfy Alberta Health Services’ relaunch template.

[00:10:00]

Excuse me, I’m just going to have a drink of water here.

So for that next month, I was not working, and I had to create this relaunch template, which involved installing a Plexiglass barrier and also submitting various other pieces of information, including the fact that I had now a medical mask exemption letter. The College determined that they would not suspend my licence, but that they were going to place conditions on my practice. Two of those conditions were obtaining patient signatures. One form indicated that patients recognized I had a medical mask exemption, and they agreed to be treated by me without my wearing a mask. And then the second letter they had to sign indicating that they answered “no” to all the pre-screening COVID questions.

Shawn Buckley

These would be the typical questions that, if you went to the hospital, you'd get screened: I've been travelling. Do you have a fever? All of the set COVID screening questions.

Dr. Curtis Wall

That's correct.

Shawn Buckley

Now, when did they impose those two conditions on you?

Dr. Curtis Wall

That was in January of 2021.

Shawn Buckley

Now, we are in April of 2023, and there hasn't been a masking requirement, I think since the truckers' convoy in January of 2022. Are those conditions still in effect on your practice?

Dr. Curtis Wall

Yes they are. They said that the conditions would remain in effect. The initial declaration they made was that the conditions would stay in effect until there was a declared end of the pandemic. And to my knowledge, I don't think there has been a declared end.

Shawn Buckley

Okay, so I expect that you are the only chiropractor in the Province of Alberta that is screening all of their patients for COVID-19 in April of 2023. And you just smile because this is quite silly, isn't it?

Dr. Curtis Wall

Yup, you're right.

Shawn Buckley

So now my understanding is that, eventually, your hearing for misconduct did proceed, and it went on for a full eight days. And I want you to tell us about your four experts and about the one expert that was called for the College.

Dr. Curtis Wall

Yes. Can I interject just before that so I don't forget?

Shawn Buckley

You sure can. You sure can.

Dr. Curtis Wall

In the late spring—because I’m coming to that right away—but late spring of 2021, Liberty Coalition Canada heard about my case and decided to support me by covering my legal fees and media coverage. And that’s another organization I just want to recognize and say that I’m indebted to. So a big thanks to them.

So yes, the hearing was originally supposed to be four days, virtual, of course. And those four days of hearing started in September of 2021. Quite quickly, we realized that four days was not going to be enough time to cover all the expert witnesses. And so in the end, it ended up being eight days of hearing and they concluded in June of 2022. And so I had testifying for me, Dr. Byron Bridle, of course he’s a world-renowned immunologist and vaccinologist. I had Dr. Thomas Warren, a medical microbiologist. I had Dr. Bao Dang, who is a respirologist. And then I had Chris Schaeffer, who is an occupational health and safety specialist in mask fitting.

Shawn Buckley

And what expert did they have for the College?

Dr. Curtis Wall

Their expert witness was an Alberta Health Services doctor, Jia Hu, who was involved in the scale-up of testing vaccinations, communications, and policy development with all things related to COVID.

Shawn Buckley

And my understanding is that in February of this year, a verdict was released. Can you tell us what the verdict was?

[00:15:00]

Dr. Curtis Wall

Yes, the hearings tribunal is composed of two chiropractors and two public members. And, in January, the end of January this year, they released their 90-page verdict [Exhibit RE-7], declaring that I was guilty of professional misconduct. And so, currently, I’m waiting for the penalty phase. I’m waiting for them to determine what they’re going to do based on all the findings.

Shawn Buckley

As far as professional misconduct, did they actually make up a new word to describe you?

Dr. Curtis Wall

Well, one of the words they used was that I was “ungovernable.” They indicated that I had a constant theme of challenging authority and what they deemed to be proper government mandates and policies. That my challenging of authority and these mandates, on a repeated basis, indicated that I had an intention to defy the pandemic directive in the first place, and that made me ungovernable.

Shawn Buckley

Okay, so I actually think it's important for us to break down what you're saying. So you had called for esteemed experts into the issue of masking, actually dealing with the facts. And you were found to be ungovernable not because they had experts to dispute your experts but because you were not following, basically, the government guidelines. So it's ungovernable now for a health care practitioner or a chiropractor in the province of Alberta to challenge a public health guideline?

Dr. Curtis Wall

Well, that's what it would seem to indicate.

Shawn Buckley

But this is important because you basically are waiting to see what your sentence is going to be. You're telling us that, basically, what they're saying is you are ungovernable because you are not accepting the government narrative as far as what's going on with masking.

Dr. Curtis Wall

Yes.

Shawn Buckley

So it's arguably professional misconduct now to disagree with government narratives if you're a chiropractor in the province of Alberta.

Dr. Curtis Wall

Yes.

Shawn Buckley

Okay, and I'm sorry. So you're still now waiting for sanctions. My understanding is that you could be liable for the costs incurred by the College for these proceedings. Can you tell us roughly how much the College has spent in finding you ungovernable?

Dr. Curtis Wall

My understanding from my legal counsel is that the College has spent well over half a million dollars just on my case alone in the last two and a half years.

Shawn Buckley

How did this affect you going through this experience?

Dr. Curtis Wall

Well, again, quite stressful. I'm a person who keeps his head down: does his job. I do not like to make waves. So for me to be thrown into this type of situation is very uncharacteristic of me. People who know me, know me as a quiet person who works behind the scenes. And so it has definitely challenged me. It's challenged me to step up to say something when I see something is wrong. And it's been stressful for my whole family.

It's probably more stressful for somebody to watch a loved one that's going through a challenge than it is, maybe, for that person who's experiencing it. So yeah, definitely, it's been a challenging time.

Shawn Buckley

Have you felt supported by other chiropractic doctors in Alberta?

Dr. Curtis Wall

Very good question. For quite a long time, I never heard a word from a single chiropractor. And that's not to the detriment of any chiropractor because I believe my case was extremely downplayed. And unless, as a chiropractor, you were staying quite in touch with some of the disciplinary situations going on, you might completely not even know about my case.

[00:20:00]

In fact, I would not doubt that there are still chiropractors in the province who have no idea about my situation. So initially, I did not hear a whole lot from chiropractors. But one by one, they were starting to pop out, and I did start to connect with other people who I trusted. And now I have quite a few who are very supportive. I couldn't do it without their support, and so I'm very grateful.

Shawn Buckley

Now, going forward, is there anything that you think should have been done differently?

Dr. Curtis Wall

Yeah, so the question was posed to me that, what could Canada do differently based on my situation? Is that what you would—

Shawn Buckley

Really, it's an open question. As an inquiry the commissioners are tasked— one of their tasks is to try and come up with things, how we could have handled this whole situation differently. And yours is a very personal story. But I'm wondering if from that—because you would have been really thinking about this—what would you say we could have changed to have better outcomes going forward?

Dr. Curtis Wall

Yes, policies, I think. I've been looking at the whole topic of policies of late. I'm not an academic in the sense of a bureaucrat understanding all these things. But I think that we have policymakers and developers at the top of the food chain—if I would have to put it that way—that push these policies down to policy enforcers, which I would say would represent our governments, our military, our police, our regulatory bodies even. And so these policy enforcers, even my own regulatory body, seemed to really— It's like they had no choice.

I wish they could have stepped back, looked at more evidence instead of so quickly having rushed into making some of the decisions they did, especially when it comes to the topic of

informed consent. I would suggest that wearing a mask is a medical procedure because it carries a risk of producing physical or mental harm. And so any healthcare professional very well understands the process of informed consent. If you're going to do a treatment on a person, you have to fully explain what that treatment is, what are the risks and benefits of that treatment, and what, maybe, alternative treatments you could do instead of that treatment. And so in my mind, regulatory bodies did not exercise informed consent as significantly as they should have or as properly as they should have when it comes to whether masking or the shots.

And so I wish that going forward, some of our regulatory agencies would have seriously considered these policies. You had Lieutenant Colonel David Redmond on this morning. He's been one of the people I've looked up to and studied his writings. And I wish our governments and our regulatory boards would have looked at some of those studies and findings because they were already put in place. They were already recognized.

Shawn Buckley

I don't want you to go too much into what other people have said. But you did raise a very interesting point in saying that there's an informed consent part to the masks. I have to confess I hadn't thought of that before. But a mask would be considered a medical device under medical device regulations and that the rationale for us getting vaccinated was actually to protect others, which was the same rationale that we were given to use masks. So I think you've raised a very important point.

And I don't have any further questions. So I'll ask the commissioners if they have any questions for you. And there being no further questions, Dr. Wall, on behalf of the National Citizens Inquiry, I sincerely thank you for attending and giving your evidence today.

Dr. Curtis Wall

Thank you very much.

[00:25:01]

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The evidence offered in this transcript is a true and faithful record of witness testimony given during the National Citizens Inquiry (NCI) hearings. The transcript was prepared by members of a team of volunteers using an "intelligent verbatim" transcription method.

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